33. Economic depression in Travancore and remedies therefor with special reference to Onattukara.

MR. N. GODA VARMA TAMPAN (*Karunagapalli taluk, Group I*) said that agriculture was the mainstay of the people of Travancore but they were finding it difficult to make both ends meet with the income from agriculture. The chief commodities from which the people derived their income were *copra*, ginger, pepper, cardamom and *coir*. In Onattukara comprising the Karunagapalli, Kartikapalli and Mavelikara taluks, the people mainly depended on *copra* and *coir* for their livelihood. With the fall in the prices of these commodities, the people were put to much hardship. The chief reason for this fall was the difficulty in finding out proper markets for the articles. The foreign merchants who purchased these articles did not give out which were the markets in demand. They were therefore in a way responsible for the low prices. A trade agent should therefore be appointed to find out markets for Travancore products.

The development of cottage industries was another way of removing the economic depression among the people. Mat weaving was an industry largely followed by the people of Karunagapalli and Kartikapalli taluks. But the Government have done nothing to encourage this industry. The people engaged in this being very poor, it had not developed to any desirable extent but was declining. Bell metal industry was another cottage industry dying out for want of encouragement.

A committee had been appointed to enquire into the causes of economic depression and find out ways for removing it and they have made certain proposals. But it was doubtful whether these proposals would have the desired effect. Elsewhere the salaries of Government officers have been reduced and in some cases even voluntary cuts were made with the object of reducing expenditure on administration. Nothing of the kind was done in Travancore. The member made the following suggestions to tide over the prevailing economic depression :—

(1) All sanctioned public works should be taken up at once. If this was done, many poor people would be able to find labour.

(2) The school fees should be reduced. The reduction of fines already ordered was not sufficient.

(3) The arrears under land revenue at the end of 1106 in the Karunagapalli taluk amounted to Rs. 15,000. The people found it difficult to pay the arrears as well as the current revenue for 1107. Extension of time should be given to them for paying the dues.

(4) Branches of the Land Mortgage Bank should be opened in all the taluks.

DEWAN'S REPLY Mr. Goda Varma Tampan, you too have covered a very wide field. Your last suggestion for opening branches of the Land Mortgage Bank, as I have already said, must wait until we see how business develops ; and, as soon as possible, branches will be established after gaining experience about the working of the present one.

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Your other suggestions are very interesting, and they will all be considered, as I said just now, in the attempts we are making to encourage industry to relieve depression and to reduce expenditure.

34. The present economic crisis in the State and some suggestions for its remedy.

MR. P. VELAYUDHAN PILLAI (*Kottarakara taluk*) said that Travancore with the rest of the world was in a period of great economic distress and consequently the people were poverty stricken. Although this depression had been in existence for more than two years, the Government have not done anything to alleviate the distress of the people. Instances were not wanting where poverty stricken people were subjected to starvation. The officers in the State were paid higher than could be allowed having regard to the economic condition of the State. Comparatively they were being paid higher than in British India. In British India all the high paid officers have voluntarily allowed a cut in their salaries and certain other retrenchment measures have also been effected. In Travancore nothing of the kind was done.

The tax-payers found it difficult to pay the tax due by them. The Government also were convinced of this position of the ryots as otherwise they would not have allowed extension of time for paying the *kist*. But in spite of that no reduction of tax was made. A benign Government would certainly have remitted one year's tax and made up this amount by retrenching the salaries of officers.

The Retrenchment Committee in the State was appointed only very late. Elsewhere similar committees were appointed earlier and their recommendations had already been brought into effect. The progress in this respect in Travancore was very slow. The salaries of officers should therefore be retrenched without further delay and all superfluous offices and institutions abolished. The member hoped that the Dewan would set an example by allowing a voluntary cut of his own salary. He also suggested that the currency policy of the Government should be shaped to suit the present conditions and the money market controlled.

The following were the other suggestions made by him for reducing public expenditure and increasing revenue:—

(1) The Law College should be closed for ten years. The Arts and the Science Colleges should be amalgamated and placed under one Principal and the Training College also should be closed for 10 years. The Women's College and all special schools should be abolished. Departmental schools should be handed over to private management as far as possible. The Public Health and Sanitary Departments should be amalgamated. So also the Press and the Mint. The administration of the Medical Department by a board should be ended.

(2) The Government should pay greater attention to forest conservancy. Several articles obtained from reserved forests were not properly utilised. An expert should be appointed as an assistant to the

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